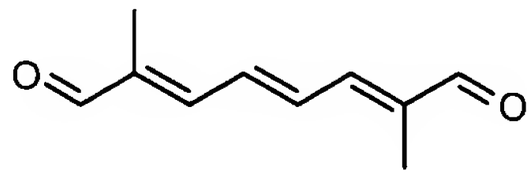
## AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

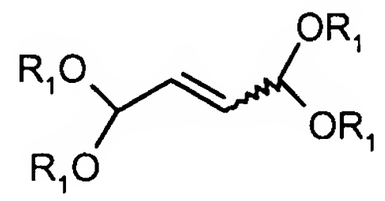
1. (Original) A process for preparing 2,7-dimethylocta-2,4,6-trienedial of the formula I,



I

by

a) double enol ether condensation of a butenedial bisacetal of the formula II

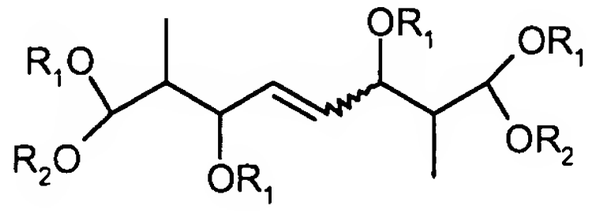


II

with an enol ether of the formula III,

III

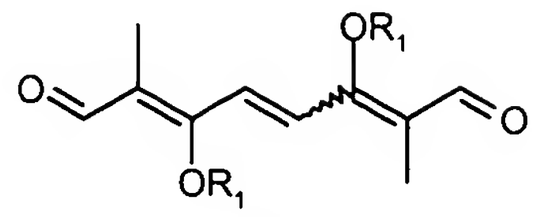
in the presence of a Lewis acid catalyst to give a condensation product of the formula IV,



IV

where the radicals $R_1$ and $R_2$ in formulae II to IV are independently of one another $C_1$-$C_6$-alkyl;

b) hydrolysis of the acetal groups of IV by adding an aqueous acid to form the dialdehyde of the formula V;



V

c) conversion of V into the dialdehyde I by reacting with an aqueous base and

d) crystallization of I from the reaction mixture,

wherein process steps a) to d) are carried out in the presence of an inert, water-immiscible organic solvent.

2. (Original) The process according to claim 1, wherein toluene is used as solvent in all of process steps a) to d).

3. (Currently amended) The process according to claim 1 [~~or 2~~], wherein the double enol ether condensation in process step a) is carried out in the presence of $ZnCl_2$, $BF_3$ etherate or $FeCl_3$ or of mixtures thereof.

4. (Original) The process according to claim 3, wherein anhydrous $FeCl_3$ is employed as Lewis acid catalyst.

5. (Currently amended) The process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 4~~ claim 1, wherein aqueous sulfuric, nitric, phosphoric or hydrohalic acid or mixtures thereof are employed for the acetal cleavage in process step b).

6. (Original) The process according to claim 5, wherein aqueous sulfuric acid is used.

7. (Currently amended) The process according to ~~any of claims 1 to 6~~ claim 1, wherein aqueous solutions of alkali metal or alkaline earth metal hydroxides, carbonates or bicarbonates are employed for the elimination reaction in process step c).

8. (Original) The process according to claim 7, wherein an aqueous sodium bicarbonate solution is used.

9. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the radicals $R_1$ and $R_2$ independently are methyl, ethyl, n–propyl or 1–methylethyl.

10. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the radicals $R_1$ and $R_2$ independently are methyl or ethyl.

11. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the radicals $R_1$ and $R_2$ are methyl.